



Testimony of
AFT Connecticut

**HB 6549 An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health's Oversight Responsibilities
Relating to Scope of Practice Determinations of Health Care**

Public Health Committee
March 11, 2011

AFT Connecticut is a statewide labor union that represents more than 6,000 healthcare workers in public and private sector hospitals, clinics, home health agencies and schools throughout the state. These workers are registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, advance practice nurses, technicians, technologists, therapists, researchers, aides, clerical personnel, and maintenance and service workers.

AFT Connecticut understands that scopes of practice for health care professionals may need to be modified over time. Training, education, technology and the needs of health care institutions frequently change and practitioners are required to adjust accordingly. The current practice of defining scopes of practice in statute and amending them through the legislative process has allowed health care professionals and policy experts to share experiences and recommendations with the legislature. We strongly believe that this part of the process must be maintained and perhaps, enhanced.

While the legislative process can be slow and legislators, as part-time lawmakers, may not have in-depth knowledge about a particular practice area, the General Assembly, like no other entity, has the ability and the resources to gather input from relevant experts and stakeholders statewide. Through this process AFT Connecticut, like other professional organizations, has been able to share concerns with decision makers about how changes to a practice act would impact practitioners and their ability to deliver safe, quality health care services.

Amending a scope of practice is not an academic exercise. These actions will have real life implications that may apply to the entire industry or to a unique setting. Without including a process to solicit feedback and expertise from all stakeholders, any method for altering practice acts would be doomed to fail. For this reason, AFT Connecticut encourages the Public Health Committee to maintain an avenue for health care professionals and their advocates to engage in meaningful discussion that will result in scopes of practice that accurately reflect the needs of the workers, consumers and the health care industry.